

For Immediate Release

Contact: Erica Daughtrey

December 2, 2010

201-222-2828

Washington, D.C.-- Today, Congressman Sires joined his colleagues in the House of Representatives in passing S. 3707, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act by a vote of 264 - 157. This bill addresses childhood hunger, child nutrition program management, and child obesity. This legislation was previously passed by unanimous consent by the Senate on August 5, 2010, and will now be sent to the President's desk for signature.

"This bill will play a crucial role in improving the health and wellness of our children," said Congressman Sires. "In 2009, New Jersey's total participation in the National School Lunch Program was 705,558 and low-income participation was 376,871. This legislation will provide \$6,817,000 in funding for New Jersey to improve lunch programs. By improving the nutritional quality of school breakfast, lunch, and snacks, we can make progress towards ending obesity and creating a healthy lifestyle."

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act will provide funding to reduce childhood hunger and address childhood obesity and improve nutrition programs such as the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women,

Infants, and Children (WIC). Under this legislation, reimbursement rates to schools will be increased for schools that serve both breakfast and lunch that meets federal nutrition standards. The bill also permits the Agriculture Department to set science-based nutrition rules for all food sold in schools, including food from vending machines. Medicaid data will be used to certify children for school meal programs without requiring household applications. This measure is expected to bring approximately 115,000 new students into the school meal programs. After-school supper programs will also be expanded and is expected to provide 21,000,000 meals to at-risk children.

Nationwide over 31 million children participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and this legislation will provide healthier meals to 31 million children and provide over \$300 million to states. The poverty rate for children in the United States is currently 20.7 percent, an increase of 15.6 percent in just ten years. Additionally, one in three children are obese or overweight, and one out of four young adults are too overweight to serve in the military.

“Access to nutritious foods should be made available to all our children,” said Sires. “This legislation is fully paid for and will provide the most significant improvements to child nutrition programs in more than thirty years.”

###